

AN ACCOUNT

From the Children of light,
 (to them that askes) in several particulars,
 why we have been kept from joyning to, or worshipping in,
 those formes at Law, and formes of worships, that have been imposed
 upon us against our consciences, in these late years, for denying whereof,
 we have so deeply suffered, with our lives, Liberties, and Estates.

Also what we own, as to those things, and can be obedient to for conscience
 sake, according to truth, and the practice of the church of Christ, and the
 Scriptures

*For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience: that in simplicity
 and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, we
 have had our conversation in the world (2 Cor. 1:12).*

LONDON

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 retained.

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L O N D O N;

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{Page 3} *For as much as many have desired to know the ground in particulars of our differences in faith and worship towards God, and in some things as to the outward forms at Law, which men have sought to impose upon us in these late yeares; and also what we would desire therein; therefore is this written following, towards the satisfying of every honest desire who loves the kingdome of Christ.*

There is no kingdome nor people can truly be said to be the Lord's and his Christ's, but as they come to be guided and governed by the law of his Spirit in their Consciences, which Spirit and *anoynting* all must wait for, even from the King that sits on high to the least place be by of government in any people, that with it all may know *Judgment* and to do Justice, which is of God and not of men, That he may be known to be the *anoynting of Kings, and to judge among the Judges*, whose right it is of old; and God hath given it to him by an everlasting generation, even after the power and {Page 4} order of an *endlesse life*, That in him and in his seed many nations and kingdoms be blessed with peace, even through and in his *Righteous government*; for God the Father accepts neither persons, laws, nor governments, how prudently soever they be made, if they be not in him, and from him, and for him; because for him, was made all souls that move, not only in earth but in heaven also. All signes, and seasons, types and shadows, worship and sabbath was made for him the *son of man*, And no flesh breathing, nor Spirits neither, men or Angels hath any true power or right, but as they receive it in him, and so use it to him, and for him, over any of these things *visible* or *invisible*, to rule, force, or order, no not over his own body, but by usurpation; and for the time that he or they shall hold that power, and not in him, as aforesaid, they shall be under the curse of God, not established in peace and righteousness, but in tyranny and oppression; with force or with flattery must such rule in their day, until their measure of time and sin be fulfilled, in which the vengeance of the Almighty shall remove them far away, only their names shall remain as a curse to those that come after. Thus God will plead the cause of his own seed, and overturn and shake nations and kingdoms, *untill the earth know that the heavens must reigne*, and the stout of heart confess that *the head of every man is Christ*, and that God hath made this *same Jesus* (which men hath rejected) both *Lord & Christ*, which in his time he shall show to be *the only Potentate, King of Kings, and {Page 5} Lord of Lords*, who only hath *immortality dwelling in the light*, where he sits at the right hand of power till God shall make all his foes his footstoole.

1 John 3.27. (See 2.27)

Isa. 5.6.

2 Chro. 19.6

Isa. 6.9.

Mat. 12.8.

Heb. 2.10.

Dan. 4.25.

Acts 2.36.

1 Tim. 6.15.

Now this is that we wait for in every appearance and face of authortie that comes up, to wit, the face of Jesus our righteous King and Savior, in whom is no violence, nor oppression, who when he comes to rule, we know will be tender of the tender in Conscience, and meek towards the poore in spirit, and *with righteousness will he judge and rule on the earth*, to deliver the helplesse from him that is too hard for him, who will drive wickedness from his throne, and the workers thereof into a corner, but will gently deal towards all that travails with righteousness and put *the Lambs of truth* in his bosome, *for he loves righteousness, and hates iniquity*; therefore hath God called him *his anointed* and will give him *the heathen for his possession*, and a priest to God he is to all generations; in his days shall *the upright rejoice*, for he shall walk safely in his uprightness; no nett shall then be spread on the mountains, neither shall he that turns from iniquity be made a prey, for under him shall everyone serve his God *without feare, in holinesse of life*, and godliness of conversation. Isa. 11.4.
Isa. 40.11
Psal.45.7
Jer. 23.5,6.
Luk. 1.24.

Now this is he we wait for, even the beloved of our soules, and we know *his birth is come to the nations* and his morning towards the people, yea to the wise in heart, who are yet afar off, hath his star appeared; And we know his breaking forth to these islands as the *bright sun* after the stormy rain, even so {Page 6} shall he be after the shakings; *he shall be a covert from the tempest*, as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, even so shall he be, *who shall reigne in righteousness*, and by whom *Princes shall rule in Judgment*; this is the *Royal Seed*, and he that is of him is the *son of Nobles*; his Princes eate in due season, for strength, and not for drunkennesse; thus shall the land be blessed, who is found worthy to receive *the anoynted of God* to rule in its borders. Isa. 6.3.
2 Sam. 23.4
Isa. 32.1,2. Eccles. 10. 16,17.

And this is he whom we have preached to all the severall governments that hath risen ever since God revealed him in us, and the glory and peace of his kingdome; and we have patiently waited, and in great sufferings hath our soules travelled, to see if by any means, we might see any worthy to receive *his anoynting* and to be borne of his Spirit, to governe by his *power*, and with his Counsell to order, and be ordered, that through him they might be established of God; and we have looked through the vail of flesh in all sorts of people, and could not bow thereto, and by many contrary Spirits have we been evill entreated because we could not owne *them* for *him* whose kingdome we seek, in rulers, teachers, and people.

And thus have we gone seeking the righteous one, through Parliaments and Protectors (so-called), Priests, and Rulers of all sorts; but his government

we have not found, nor with his righteous Judgments have we been judged among them, but we have been shamefully entreated *for his sake* and have borne his reproach, because *of his Spirit in us*, {Page 7} and his kingdome *in our consciences*; and many times have been tried to the losse of estates, and lives, to see if they could provoke or drive us from his faith in our Consciences, or tempt us any way to deny him and own them in their wills. And though we have daily suffered thus under every severall power, and people, yet have we not ceased to warne them in love, with much feare and plainnesse, that if by any meanes they might have received his testimony, and not have perished in their gainsaying; for our God in whom we trusted shewed it to us, that they should not prosper, nor be established without him, his Spirit and anoynting, to whom he hath given the government of all people that shall be blessed by him, yea, *all the nations, of them that are saved must walke in his light*, and receive his counsel for their stability, and his resurrection for their glory, and his anoynting for the strength of their kingdomes.

And this is the Cause why we have chused rather to suffer under every power that yet hath risen, than to joyne in with them, because we have not heard the voyce of the *holy one* in the midst of them, neither hath his Spirit in them been the strength of their Counsell, but they have sought to make *flesh their arm* and to strengthen their kingdome *with flattery and deceit* and not with *truth*, and they have sought to make themselves dreadfull by violence, and to rule with cruelty, and not with the sword of God, which is judgment and justice; and have sought *honour from men*, and not from the Lord, and {Page 8} their Covering hath been *vaine glory*, and not *the Spirit of God*; So with the light of Christ we saw their foundation and their building, and that they could not stand long in God's sight, and that all that joyned to them must fall with them, and that the woes that are written of such must certainly overtake them.

And this is the Cause, and no other thing, why we have hitherto borne our testimony against them all, even because they would not joyn to the Lord, nor heare his voyce in their day, but the more he called after them by the mouth of his servants, the more they were hardened and the more provoked him to their own confusion; so it hath not been prejudice to any mans person that hath kept us at a distance from them or their commands, for we can truly say we have waited without prejudice, if by any means we could but have seen any of them seeking the kingdome of God, that therein they might have been established, yea we have the witnesse of truth in us to this day, how glad our soules have been before the Lord, when we have but

Psal. 69.9, Lam. 3.14.

Rev. 21.24.

Isa. 5. 21.

Jer. 17.5.

John 5.44.

Isa. 30.1.

felt the least tendernesse in any of them, arising from the Spirit of Jesus, or the least confession from his light in them.

And sometimes we have felt some tendernesse in some of them when they have been low, little, and in fear, in which we have had some hope and gladnesse to heare the voyce of *simplicity and truth*, (though but brokenly) so that we could then have said they was *not far from the kingdome of God*; But turning away the eare from the Spirit of truth in {Page 9} them, and consulting with fleshly wisdom and carnall reason likely to make wise, and to accomplish their selfe ends, how soone hath truth fallen in them, and blindness and hardnesse of heart come over them again worse than before, which being shewed us of God, we could not but deny them also to be of God.

Thus in general, an account is given to you that askes a reason, why we have not yet owned any power that yet hath risen, so as to joyn to them in all things. Now to you who desire to know in what particulars we have differed from these governments that yet hath risen since we was a people; we might say our lives, practices, and sufferings hath openly declared it, through the most parts of these nations, and in most, and greatest of our differences. Yet for the better satisfying of some that knows not so much as others, and to take away all occasion of offense from all that would not oppose the way of truth if they knew it, and to leave without excuse the willfully ignorant, and persecutors of the good old way of Christ; I shall instance in some things, and also shew our warrant for so doing, both by Scripture and the practice of the holy men of God in their generation; it being that so many are yet ignorant and unbelieving concerning the present leadings of the Spirit of truth in them, which is chief leader and *corner stone* in us, by which we walk Rom. 8.14. Gal. 5.18. towards God and towards men in all these things.

And as to that first. Though God hath laid it upon us as a matter of Conscience to be subject to what outward government or governors soever he shall set up over us, in outward things; and also that with all willingnesse of mind a ready subjection be rendered, at every *just command*, not for fear onely, but even for Conscience sake; and that in all things, we should seek the safety and honor and well-being of such governors, to the utmost of our power, even as we looke to account to God for it, of whom the powers that be are ordained; yet hath he begotten us unto himselfe alone, and to the leadings of his own Spirit in all things concerning faith and worship, as to matter, manner, time and place; This is to be done and performed singly as to him, in the *leadings of Jesus*, and in the power of his Spirit alone, else will Mat. 17.5

2 Cor. 10.6.

he have no regard thereto; And for this purpose hath he given the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, to be our light and understanding and leader in all these things; to which leadings and movings the Father requires obedience *in all things*, upon eternal condemnation in matters pertaining to our consciences; That must be the throne of Christ alone, and there will he sway the Scepter of eternall life and answer his people in all things, and be their Savior, guide, and lawgiver, in all things that are just and holy.

Isa 28.7

Jerem. 23. Amos 2.4

Amos 7.14

Jerem. 23. Isa. 1.9.

So that if at any time their teachers have left the way of life, and would lead people after them, yet hath he through faith and a tender Conscience, preserved a seed out of error to himself in such a day, by which he hath reprov'd and made manifest the folly of such teachers; And to this the Scriptures doe {Page 11} fully testifie, as in the dayes of the Prophets, when they *erred in vision*, and had not *the word in them*, and so caused the people *to err through their lyes and through their lightnesse*; then had he men of enlightened Consciences, to send to reprove their brutishnesse, though otherwise they themselves was neither Prophets nor sons of Prophets, but may be a *heardsman* or a gatherer of *siccomore fruite*, a plowman, or a shepherd, or some such, which *Englands* pride would call mecannick fellows, yet in these was the seed preserved, else the land might have become as *Sodom*, and not one have known the Lord nor his word. And as it was in the dayes of the false Prophets, so hath it been since the days of the false Ministry, for which many have suffered since the dayes of the Apostles for testifying against such as have *erred in Spirit, forme, and doctrine*, from Christ Jesus and his Apostles; And this hath been from the *indwelling* power of Christ in them, and his precious light shining in their hearts and consciences, that they have thus been preserved, and enabled to bear the testimony of Christ against false worships and worshippers; and so it is at this day, in all who keep a pure conscience towards God in all his word and worship, that his true and spiritual worship might not be wholly lost out of the world.

Hester 3.

Also if at any time their Kings or Rulers forgot God, or Kings arose who knew not God and then would lay upon them Laws and Commands which was not just and lawfull for them to doe, then by *the light of Christ* in a pure Conscience they was enabled to {page 12} withstand it even unto death; as that of *Mordecai* and the Jews, who would rather all be destroyed than bow to *Hamans* pride at the Kings command, though *Englands* people would have said this is but *a civil thing, and duty, and good manners*, and the like, yet *God's Law* in their Conscience they preferred above all that the King commanded contrary thereto, yea life and all would they lose rather than

defile their Conscience towards God, or deny his law there, though no law without had forbidden such a thing; Yet in other cases did they appeare true and subject to the King, for *Mordecais* truth saved the Kings life, not long before, though from man he had little reward for it.

Likewise might be Instanced, that of *Daniels* praying contrary to the decrees of the King, his Councell of *Presidents and Princes*, and that of the *three children* against the fierce Command of *Nebuchadnezzar*, in denying to worship at his will and pleasure; likewise that of the Apostles, when their Rulers and Priests also, charged them straitly not to preach any more, their answer before authoritie was, *we ought to obey God rather than men*; yea it would be too long to tell how many godly men and women, upon the account of a pure Conscience, not only hazarded their lives, but lost life and all, for the testimony of a tender Conscience, as might be instanced. But this may be said for all: that if they would but have denied the law of God in their conscience, and conformed to the wills of men and their laws, not one of all the Prophets, Apostles, or all the holy men of God {page 13} need to have suffered death or spoyl.

Dan. 6. Dan. 3.

Acts 5.28,29.

So now in that any of us by the same Spirit of Christ, and from his light and law in our Consciences, are moved to go testife against false Prophets, false worships, and declare the way of truth to all people against them to their face; And if Rulers have been so opposite to this as to make laws against it, and to command us to bow and worship at their wills, which for Conscience sake towards God we could not, for which we have suffered the spoyling of goods, long and heavy imprisonments, shameful usings, and loss of lives also; I say, in this we have a *cloud of witnesses*, even the *Lord Jesus* our Captaine and the whole body of Martyrs, who have all gone before us in the selfe same obedience of faith and Spirit, and have suffered the same or such like things from Rulers that knew not God, and teachers that knew not God, in their dayes, and all of them in their days was counted offenders, heretics, or dispisers of Authority, or some such reproach was cast upon them by their accusers and persecutors, for obeying the law of their God in their Consciences, whom the Rulers *of the darkness of this world have not known*, nor can know, till they beleve his light in their own Consciences.

John 16.2,3.

So it is not for new things nor strange opinions, which was never in the world before, for which we suffer (though to the world they seem new and strange), but for the very same works of the same Spirit of light and truth, which hath often appeared in a poore contemptible people, and hath as {Page 14} often received the same measure, from them who professe him in words,

but in works deny him; by such have we suffered, who read and preach the same in words which this eternall Spirit in us now worketh; And with such who with words *garnish the sepulchres* of those whom their fathers slew, are we counted great offenders, for being found in the same way and practice, and in obedience to the same Spirit, in that measure as we have received it. So we have this added to the testimony of a good Conscience towards God, and towards men, that *we suffer not for evill doing, though as evill doers* (to wit) the practice of holy men, and the Scriptures of truth which will owne us herein and stand on our parts against all our adversaries and accusers. And this will be proved so when we come to particulars, wherein we differ from the ways and worships, of these present times, and for which we are so much hated and persecuted.

And we know that it will not be found harmfull to the bodyes, estates, or well-being of any Christian neighborhood, nor of any other people in the nations, to practice those things wherein we differ, in civill and temporall things, nor hurtful to the soules of any. In the things wherein we differ in religious or spirituall matters from the several opinions and formes of worships that are or have been set up in these nations; As we shall make it plainly appeare if either Spirit of truth, or Scripture of truth, or things equall may but be received on our part. Now we shall mention some particulars in which we differ {Page 15} for Conscience sake from some of the formes, traditions and commands of the men of this present age, and the powers that have ruled therein, under whom we have therefore suffered as evildoers.

And first as to those things which some calls civill:

And indeed it may be wondered at, by any moderate people, that in a nation called Christians, any man should suffer, so much as to be called an offender, for some of the things which I must mention upon this account, especially they being laid upon us by the Spirit of Christ as matter of conscience, and by a people so highly pretending for liberty of Conscience.

As it hath been layd upon us by the Spirit of Christ, to use the same single language to all sorts of people, which the Scriptures uses, and all the holy men of God therein have ever used, that is to say, *thou* to any one person, and *you* to more than one; A language sound, and true, to God, and man, which the Spirit of God first spoke, and gave to man, and of man received it againe without offence, and never since gave to man any other

forme of speech, as we may read in the Scriptures of truth; And in this we differ from some sorts of people, and for it have suffered as great offenders, and have undergone very grievous censures, and long imprisonments, divers of us, though it hath been laid {Page 16} on our Consciences from the Lord, yea. the Scriptures also, commands the *form of sound words*, to be holden fast; now why those who profess the Scriptures for their rule should persecute us for using the language of it, may be thought strange to the hearers thereof; yet for this we suffer for a testimony against them. 2 Tim. 1.13.

Also it hath been layd upon us by the Lord to call men and women by their own names, which their fathers have given to them, to be knowne by amongst men; and though in this we differ from some sorts of people, who can give flattering titles to some people in stead of their names, and reproachfully miscall others in stead of their names, yet herein we are owned by the Scriptures of truth and the practice of all the holy men therein, who never refused their own names to take a proud title, but owned their names that God had given them. And saith the Scriptures, *let me not give flattering titles to man, for in so doing my maker would soon take me away. And if you respect persons, you commit sin and are convinced of the law as evildoers*; yet for this we have suffered also by this generation as evill doers and contemners of authoritie, though we know that to call a man by his name contemnes not his authoritye, nor do we it for that end, but in obedience to truth, and for Conscience towards God. Job 32. 21,22.
James 2.

Also that about our hats putting off, which hath been so great an offense to many; This also hath been layd upon our Consciences by the Lord and we dare not disobey him therein to please men, though sometimes it hath {Page 17} been said to us that if we would but put off our hats, we should not go to prison; others have said, when we came before them for Judgment and Justice, *you shall have no justice unless you put off your hats*; yea some have hazarded their lives hereon, yet durst not disobey God herein, though they have suffered long therefore and lost their rights for want of justice: yet we have not dared to disobey our God herein, but have valued our peace with him and a pure Conscience above all sufferings and profits herein. Now, this is beyond all the persecutors of old, that men should suffer for their *hats*; yea, even *Nebuchadnezzar* in his greatest heate of persecution, he made not that an offence, to keepe on their *hats*, more than their other garments, but with their hats on as well as hose and shooes, they was bound and cast into the fire; nor doe we finde in all the Scriptures precept or practice of that thing, yet for this we have deeply suffered in divers parts of this nation. Dan. 3.21.

Thus would people and powers drive us from the obedience of our God, in a pure Conscience, and instead thereof cause us to worship a vain Custome, for which we have no warrant, neither in Scripture, nor good example; but saith the Lord, *Ye shall keep mine ordinances, but the customs of the people are vain and abominable; you shall not defile yourselves therewith.* So we obey God rather than men, and by men who professes God, suffer for so doing.

This also hath been commanded us of the Lord, and layd upon our Consciences, not to *sweare at all*, upon any occasion whatsoever, {Page 18} and because of this we have forborne to sweare, when men have called us thereto, whether to sweare at any change of government, or what ever it hath been, we may not *sweare* at all. And for this we have deeply suffered also as contemnners of the law, though we have not despised government but have consented to what just thing was required of us, in truth of heart, without swearing; And for this we have the express command of Christ Jesus who hath said, *Sweare not at all.* And his Apostles said, *Above all things, my brethren, swear not, lest you fall into condemnation.* And we have also the practice of all the followers of Christ, who was never knowne to use an oath since; for to such as receive Christ there is the end of swearing; and divers other things which before Christ came to end them, was ordinances of God, but Christ the covenant everlasting hath ended all swearings of men whatsoever, and forbidden they are in his name upon paine of condemnation. Further, in the time of *Moses*, when swearing was in the Jews Church, it was not to be forced upon them by any penalty, but they might sweare or not sweare, without any carnall punishment, nor was it required of witnesses to sweare at all, betwixt a man and his neighbor, two witnesses was to establish the matter before the Judge; but I never read of those two required to sweare, that was as to a mans owne particular, onely in this case, when a man had taken a pledge, and it was stolen from him, then an oath was to be taken of that man in his owne behalfe, that he put not his hand to the stealeing of it, {Page 19} and then he was not to repay it againe, but if he would repay it he needed not sweare, so he was not forced. And except in this case onely, I finde not an oath required by any Judge in *Moses* law. So these who make us offenders for denying to sweare are out of all the way of God in *Moses* time. And in Christ's time, swearing is expressly forbidden at all, even this in *Moses* time. For saith Christ, *It hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thy oaths.* So here was *Moses* time, and swearing to the Lord, commanded in truth; and this said *Moses*. But (saith Christ) I say, *Sweare not at all*, and this is greater

Lev. 18.30.

Jer. 23.10.

Mat. 5.34. James 5.12.

Lev. 19.12

Mat. 5.34.

then *Moses*, whose time is without end.

Further, as to the administration of the Laws of these nations in these late yeares, there we have seen many things which in our Conscience we cannot joyne to, being shewed to us to be out of truth, and equity, and not helps, but burthens to the nations; Now as to our selves, so many as walke in Christ Jesus, we have one Judge and Lawgiver appointed to us for that end by the Father; And we may not goe to Law one with another, as men being come to Christ Jesus, the end of lust, pride, and strife, which we have found to be the cause of fightings and sutes at Law, and if anything of that nature would arise in any of us, by our Judge and Law-giver it is judged, and we are saved; And it is layd upon us by the same Spirit of Christ not to *sue any man at the law*, nor to seek to avenge ourselves of such as seeke to wrong us, but to love our enemies, and pray {Page 20} for them that despitefully use us and hate us; and so from all men to suffer for peace sake, for to peace we are called, towards all men, and under the prince of peace is our government, so that we need not men to end controversies amongst us, who are all in unity of spirit and life, in Christ Jesus. Mat. 5.

But when men haile us before Judgment Seats, or cause us to appeare at their courts of Law, then we meet with many things among them there, which for Conscience sake we cannot bow to, nor uphold, finding them not only against the rule of Christians, but, out of the way of common honesty as men, yea many things against truth it selfe; and this we cannot serve, as Law, which is against truth.

As when they send a Writ to appeaer at their courts in a mans owne proper person, and in obedience thereto we have come, (may be) two hundred miles or above, and tendered our appearance accordingly, at the very day appointed, then they have with violence and reproach thrust us out of their Courts, because we did appeare in our own persons, and not in another mans person, whom we have not known, and for this have we suffered much damage, & long imprisonment, as contemners of authority and Law. Now, this we cannot joyne to in our hearts, nor owne as honesty, and truth, and plain dealing as men, to let goe, all talk of Christians; the heathen would not do this to us.

Also, when our adversary puts up a Bill of charge against us, drawn up in a forme without truth, fill'd with false accusations, as {Page 21} though our offense amounted to hundreds or thousands of pounds wrong, or damage, when with the truth of Christ in our Conscience we know that we have never wronged that man one penny in our lives, but that it is the enemy of

truth and peace, even that Old accuser of the brethren, which now works in that Creature to spoyle our goods or take our lives, or liberties from us; Then, we are not suffered to returne an answer in the feare of our God, and in plainnesse and truth of expressions, as the Spirit of truth shall move in the simplicity of our hearts; And so with the Spirit of truth to deny the lyes and false accusations of the adversary; But we must be forced to give unreasonable sums of money to another man, whom we know not, nor knows he our state and case in this matter, to answer in our stead, who for ought we know, may instead of sharply reprovng those abominable lyes, justify them, at least as a legall thing, or forme at Law, fit to be used. And thus our testimony against falsehood is taken from us, which the Spirit of truth requires of us, and we pay money to have it justified, as a forme at Law, when we know it to be a forme of lyes; And we cannot leave the truth, to serve this deceit; beside, were the truth no dearer to us, but that we could thus give it up to be betrayed knowingly, yet it seems to us unreasonable, as men, to give our cause into the hands of him that knows it not, further than we must informe him, nor when we have informed him, have no assurance whether he will speak our words or his owne, or our adversaries, {Page 22} and so bring us under the guilt of the whole body of falshood. This appeares to us very unreasonable, and dangerous, and below the privilege of a man, as a man, much more as a Christian, so we rather chuse to suffer innocently under falsehood, keeping our consciences cleare, than consent thereto, and so establish mischief under pretense of a Law, *Psal.* 94:20. and deny our testimony for the truth, to which we are called, and for which we suffer in all these things.

Also, if any of us be sued at the *Exchequer* or *Chancery*, and appeare and take a Coppie of the Bill, and goe to the Judges with a true answer thereto, they will refuse it, because we cannot sweare, though they will shew us no written law for so doing, but tell us it's a Custome, and this custome is preferred above his law who saith, *sweare not at all*; and for this have many been imprisoned, it being put upon us either to deny their Custome, or Christs command, so we chuse to suffer by men, for a season, rather than defile our Consciences.

If we be summon'd to doe service for the Country, on a Jury, and be willing to do the service faithfully as to God and man, yet because we cannot sweare, many are fined, imprisoned, and their goods spoiled, and reputed unserviceable in the nation, when we would freely serve the country, so as we might not therein deny Christ, our saviour.

Isa 59.4. *Isa* 28.15.

Jer. 9.3,4,5

Pro. 12.19.

Pro. 29.12.

Psal. 40.4

If one of us be summon'd to appeare at a court for a witnesse, that would testifie the truth before God from a good Conscience and in the feare of God, and according to his Law, *viz.* in all things, that if we should {Page 23} wrong any man whatsoever through our false testimony, that it's just the same should be done to us, yet because we cannot sweare (be the action never so great,) our true testimony is refused, and we thrust away without Judgment & threaten'd to cause us to pay what they say the party is damnified for our not swearing, and all this we must suffer for obeying Christ's Commands.

Duct. 19.16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

If one of us should buy a piece of land, or have some fallen to him by inheritance, and come to the *Court Baron* to take it up, they will not let him take it except he *sweare*, and so break Christ's sayings; or if a man purchase, or have an inheritance within a customary Court, it's the same, and they will turne us without it, if we will not sweare contrary to Christ's commands. And thus is the evil custom of a court preferred before Christ's commands, a good Conscience, and a familys whole estate and livelihood.

If a man bind an apprentice in this city of *London*, and give a great summe of money with him, and the prentice serves his time honestly and truly, and have his Masters testimony thereto, yet is he denied his freedome if he cannot sweare for conscience sake, and so must lose money and service if he be faithfull to Christ.

If one of us should die intestate, they will not suffer our owne wife or Children to administer on our owne goods, unlesse they will *sweare* against their Conscience, and the law of Christ; or if we make a will, and make wife or Children Executor, they are denyed to prove the will, whereby they are to enjoy {Page 24} their estates, but by breaking that Command of Christ in swearing.

Likewise, when some of us have been arrested to appeare at such a Court such a day, and have simply given bond to appeare; And when the appearance hath been made at the day expressed by the party so bound, neither the appearance would be taken, nor the bond delivered, but a further snare, because another man appears not for us whom we never knew, nor had aught to doe withall.

Also about marriage, which we know to be an ordinance of God from the beginning, and being ordered in the counsell of God and the bed not defiled is honorable, *but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* So as any are moved of the Lord into that state, we say the Counsell of the Lord is first and chiefly to be minded, and the thing weighed in his feare, that it be done onely in the Lord, that it be not taken on lightly, rashly, nor by any

1 Cor. 7.39.

fleshly motion, nor for any earthly ends, but in the moving & ordering of the Almighty Creator of man and woman, who onely knows their spirits. So to joyne them, as they may be one in flesh and spirit, that he may seeke a godly seed to himselfe, and they may lead a godly and peaceable life; & only thus is it God's ordinance as God puts together; and saith Christ, let not man put such asunder; and this we say is the chief thing to be observed, *viz.* that God joyne them; And next that notice be given to the parents or such as have the oversight of each party, that (as much as may be) all may be done in love and unity in the will of God openly. And {Page 25} this we have from God in Spirit, and this we find in Scripture to be the ordinance of God to his Saints of old, and their libertie in the Lord; which God never altered, which we keepe for conscience sake, and may not breake. And lest any licentious persons should abuse this liberty, to satisfy their lusts, and then not live as man and wife during their lives, and the Magistrates not know of them, and so they escape the sword of justice, we have freedom in our spirits to acquaint some of the next Magistrates with our intents, and hereby confesse ourselves lyable to the just censure of the Magistrate, with others, in case of misdemeanour, and all this we have done ere coming together as man and wife, which is as much as the ordinance of God, or any reason can justly require, yet have some of us suffered in this case by the changeable Laws of men, who some of them have sought to impose one sort of Priests on us as an ordinance, others Justices as an ordinance, and others another sort of priests again; so for denying these uncertain rules of men, and keeping the ordinance of God that was in the beginning, we suffer by all of them as evill doers, yet have they not one charge against any of us, who have been joyned according to this ordinance of God, as to breach of marriage, or misdemeanor therein: for we hate putting away, and come to that which was in the beginning.

These with many other things there be, as touching the outward Laws, whereby both our lives, liberties, and estates become a daily prey to mercilesse men, from which {Page 26} hath been manifest such imprisoning till death, such persecution and spoyle of goods, as many generations to come may admire to read of, though in this generation it's little regarded or minded, unless it be by some few, whose hearts God hath tendred, that have not been so cruel in their places as others.

Now let none say, that because we cannot bow to such unrighteous dealings of corrupt men, or their corrupt Customes, or corrupt Lawes, That therefore we are a people that would have no Law, nor Magistracy at all, as some have falsely accused us: for of this we are cleare before the Lord our

Mila. 2.15. *Ma* 19.6.

Math. 19.8.

Math. 19.4.

God, what ever men may accuse us herein, for the law of God we own in our Conscience, even *the law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord and lawgiver*, by which we are taught to keepe our Consciences voyde of offense towards God and towards men, by which we are freed from under the power of *the Law of sin and death*. And by this Law of God in our consciences, are we also taught to be subject to every power our God shall set up over us, by which teaching we know that the powers that be are ordained of God. And by the same Law of God in our hearts and Consciences by which we are made to suffer, rather than to obey that which is unjust, by the same Law, and upon the same penalty are we made to be subject and obey every just and wholesome Law of man, for Conscience sake; Therefore, as the ordinance of God, we obey and own authoritie in the Nation; And the ruler of the people as the Minister of God, for good to such as doe well, {Page 27} but a terror to every evill doer without respect of persons; so we being guided by the pure law of God in our consciences, are subject *not for wrath, but for conscience sake*; for he is not a terror to them that do well, and obey God in their Consciences. But if any doe evil, let such fear, *for he is the Minister of God, and bears not the sword in vaine*. And for this cause we pay tribute to whom it belongs, and feare to whom feare, honour to whom honour; And from this we exempt not ourselves more than other people in the same nation, but desire rather to be examples to others with all diligence, not speaking evill of governments as many doe which will flatter to their faces, but seeking to our God for what authority he shall ordaine, that under them we may be godly and quietly governed, without respect of persons. Rom. 8.2.

Therefore we might say, as to all the severall Rulers that hath arisen in these yeares since we were a people in Gods light, which of them have we reviled or sought to supplant, or what just law, old or new? (which hath been just, and according to Scriptures, or a good Conscience) have we denyed or transgressed? though from the evill and abuse of all, God hath by his eternal light, and the power of his Spirit, preserved us to this day, glory to our God forevermore. So our consciences are clear towards them that are fallen as to that thing, by whom we so much suffered in their day. Num. 13.

And now in Gods dread and feare we are, and in his pure Counsell alone we desire to be found towards you that are now come up {Page 28} into the seat of government, That if by any means we might not be any occasion of offence, or hardening of your hearts, by our disobedience or denying any of your Laws, which are just, wholesome and good, and according to Gods

truth in Scriptures; Nor, that on the contrary we might provoke our pure-eyed, and zealous God and Father to displeasure against us, by yielding to any thing whatsoever, or obeying what is any way against his Spirit in our hearts, or the light of Christ in our Consciences. And this at present is our strait way, set before us to walke in towards God and towards man, and therefore the desire and travaile of our soules is great at this day, that you might be one with God in your Laws and Commands, that so under you we might be godly and quietly governed, within and without. But if yet, it must be so, that your distance be so great, that with one heart we cannot obey you both, then whether it is better to obey God or men, (with the light of God in your own consciences) judge you; therefore if we can but keep peace with the one of you, we choose to keep our everlasting peace with God, and that saving faith thats held in a pure Conscience; And our prayers to the father of lights is, for our whole body of Christ's church, and every member thereof, that our hearts may be kept single to him alone, whatever we suffer from men for so doing.

Acts 4.19.

2 Cor. 1.12. 1 Tim. 3.9.

{Page 29} Now to those things which some call religious.

Though in our selves we make no such distinction, in being that our Consciences are to be exercised in the light and Spirit of Christ in all we do towards God and towards man, and every particular action towards men, God requires that it be done as to him, and to his glory, and not in our owne wills nor in men's wills, nor after their wills, manners, and customes, and commands, but in the will of God alone, revealed in Christ Jesus in Spirit and in his motion and leadings, which if we misse in, and serve either men or ourselves therein, and not God, we are accountable to him as though we had erred in that which the world calls Religion; therefore, what ever we do to God in Christ, to us is his service and pure religion, and undefiled before God, if we keep but our Conscience unspotted from the world; though it be but in visiting a fatherless child or a widow in their affliction, or any other thing which the Spirit of truth, justice and mercy leads us to, and requires of us.

James 4.23,24.

But, as the worship of God it selfe, hath relation to him alone, who is a Spirit and will be worshipped in Spirit and in truth, betwixt him and every particular creature onely known, in matter, measure and manner, time and place. And knowing that the onely wise God, who gives the kingdoms of the earth to whom he will, yea, and may set over them the basest of men as well

John 4.23,24.

Dan. 4.17.

as the most virtuous, {Page 30} without controule, if he please so to deale in judgment towards any Nation, yet this hath he reserved as an eternall Scepter in the hand of Jesus our Lord, and by an everlasting covenant hath he sworne once for all, concerning him, "*Thou art a king forever, over the holy people*, and his throne is established in their consciences by a perpetual decree, to all generations, therefore was it never known, that ever he trusted or titled any earthly Prince, *with Lord over the faith and consciences of his owne people*; This was ever the *Sons* prerogative above the Kings of the earth, and he alone is to be judge and lawgiver, and corrector, and leader, in that invisible spiritual work of worship towards God, for he only knows the way, and *none comes to the Father but by him*. Heb. 1.8,9.

It's true, the *Pope* hath taken upon himselfe, such authority under pre-tence of the Apostles, even over the faith and consciences of people, and with it hath shed much innocent blood, which lyes upon his seat, and his line, till God come to enquire for it, and for that end hath set up inquisitions, &c. And others after and from that, have erected Courts and Synods with their fines, and prisons, and tortures, to force the faith and Consciences of people, and they pretend the Apostles also, for this work. But, this we know, that the Apostles was no such men, nor used any such weapons, but deny them therein both the *Pope* and they that are risen since; And expressly deny to be Lords over Gods heritage or over their faith, neither did they preach themselves lords and masters, but {Page 31} *Christ Jesus* alone *the Lord* and themselves servants for Jesus sake, as both their owne words & practice doth 2 Cor. 4.5.
testifie; for saith Paul, *Not for that we have dominion over your faith*; And 2 Cor. 1.24.
saith Peter, *Not for filthy lucre, neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but as examples to the flock*. 1 Pet 5.3.

So we know that from *Peter* they had it not, nor from *Paul*, nor from any of the true Ministers of Christ, for their weapons was not carnall but spirituall, nor did they wrestle with flesh, but with spirit; so all they can get from the Apostles, either in word or practice, is this, that if they be troubled with errors or profanenesse in their Churches; then if they have the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, then to deliver such a one up to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the soul may be saved and body also in the day of the Lord. And this is not to goales, gallowses, or inquisitions, or tortures, or fires; now, had they this spirit and power, they would know that which would convert in deed and truth, and not make hypocrites, or else kill them, but the false Church having not these weapons, nor this Spirit and power, is builded with oppression, and upholden with blood. And in her are found 2 Cor. 10.4. Eph. 6.12.
1 Cor. 4.5.
Mic. 3.10.

the blood of all the holy Martyrs of Jesus, as saith the Scriptures, yea, even now is she drunke with blood, *Revel.* 18:24; & 17:6.

So now, this is the thing we say as to the worship of our God, and to the order of it; In all things it belongs to Christ Jesus our Lord, and to him as sole King & Lord thereof, we comit our selves, even the whole man, {Page 32} soule and body, as to all things of that nature. And though there may arise power after power, and seeke to stop us of this liberty and freedome, by acting force and violence upon our outward man, yet are we free by birth in Christ Jesus, and our inward man they cannot bind; nor can we ever while we abide in that seede, give up the right of Christ unto any of them; but this we testify in all we do or suffer, *that the right is Christs over our Consciences, and over our worships*, and to him alone we confesse before men; and he hath the name in us; And though for a time, or times we yet suffer, yet we know the end must come; and the Lamb must take the kingdome, and we know him that is true and faithfull, whom the Father hath sealed, and anointed to be *head of the church which is his body*, and to him must the nations account; And therefore we say to all the severall powers that comes upon us, we may not deny the Lord in our Consciences, to bow to, or worship in what men shall set up or command; but he that saves us daily from our sins, he shall lead us in our worship, and to him we must give the obedience of faith, who gives us faith and power by his Spirit to obey, and who hath wrought all our workes *in us and for us*, and by whose vertue it is we live, and bring forth to the praise of God, and we are not our owne, nor servants of men, but we are bought with a price, that we may serve him for ever, by whom we are redeemed and by whom all men without respect of persons must eternally be judged, or justified.

{Page 33} Therefore we say, this is a priviledge that no man should be hindered of, (to wit) the liberty of his Conscience towards his God, but that a universall liberty for all sorts of people to worship God, according as Christ shall open mens eyes to see the truth, and as he shall perswade their hearts, by his Spirit, seeing no man without Christ can do anything in this case, acceptable to God, neither can one man worship in the measure of another, but in his owne measure, as he receives of God in Christ Jesus, faith and strength and Spirit; for it must be in Spirit, and of faith, else it is sin in God's sight, whatever men think thereof.

And this is just and equall in the sight of God, and all reasonable men, and that which I know no understanding man or woman would be limited in, seeing all have immortall souls from God and to him alone must account

Col. 1.18.

Phil. 2.10.

Rev. 17.14.

Mat. 1.21.

Phil. 2.10.

1 *Cor.* 6.10.

Rom. 14.23

for them and not to men; That so every soule may stand and fall to his owne Master in this case, seeing none can save his brother, when he hath misled him, nor account to God for him; therefore he is no wise man (in our eyes) who will leave the light of Christ that once knows it, to follow another mans opinion. And seeing every man would have this liberty for himselfe, why should he go about to deny it to his brother, how is that just or equall amongst men? And how doth it answer the Law of Christ as Christians, who hath commanded that *all things whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets*; Now if you be not {Page 34} come so far in equity as to answer the Law and the Prophets, how will you answer Christ, you that professe him in words. *Rom. 14.4*

And were it not that Nations and men were drunke and bewitched with the fornication of that Scarlet-colored whore, they would foresee the danger of taking that upon them which belongs to Christ alone, it being so many have been broken on the same rock, and reason itself might shew them how safe it is not to be too forward in things of that nature, which God hath not called them to; And also it being so much contrary to that just principle in man which would lead every man to do to another as he would be done unto; And would teach every man that he ought to give up himselfe to his God in all spirituall matters; And that so he should suffer every other creature also; and seeing that there is no infallibilitie amongst men without the immediate manifestation of *Christ Jesus his light and Spirit in them*, but that since men tooke that upon them, even to sit as Lords and Judges over faith and conscience; the Lord hath scattered them in this thing, and confounded them into so many minds and judgments, that he that is subject to follow every change in these latter dayes shall scarcely abide in one opinion a yeare to an end; which things duely weighed might stay the haste of every reasonable man from forcing that upon the Conscience of another, which himselfe is not infallible in, and for which he must account to God for all soules that err through him, and so perish, in gainsaying God's witnesse. *1 Cor. 2.10,11.*

{Page 35} And this would be wisdom, with God, first to search in themselves whether they have that call from God himselfe, to force any, or they doe it to answer the desires of others, or to hold up a tradition, and so might they come to see what they serves, and whether it will beare persecution or bloud-shedding at the day of Judgment; And prove whether you have that which is infallible to force them to, or it be but thought and opinion of your selves, or others, seeing its so common a thing for Rulers and Teachers to join in forcing people that are under them to erre, and for which so many

John 3.20,21.

have been confounded and cast out, and so that all might come to prove their worke and bring it to the light, to see whether it be wrought in God, and if he will owne it with his light which is pure in their Conscience, which is an equall rule, and try what power and Spirit it is that God hath made Lord & King, and Law-giver and Leader in all his worship; and if they have not this, then it is the old persecutor and murtherer which uses to set people on fire that know not God in Spirit; And if you have that Spirit which God hath given the power to in his Church, then its gentle, drawing and powerful, without forceable imposing, or killing, nor doth he ever compel against faith and Conscience.

Rom. 7.6.

Now there be many particular things as to Gods worship and things thereto pertaining, which the men of this age would impose upon us, yea, and force them upon great penalties, which the Spirit of Christ doth not {Page 36} lay upon us as matters of faith or practice, nor ever did ordaine them in any age, nor command them to be observed in his Church, as men now impose them, but the contrary we find from the Spirit of Christ, both in the oldness of letter, and in newness of life; So these things we cannot bow to nor worship in, for conscience sake: conscience towards God, conscience towards the holy men of God in the holy life, and conscience towards the Scripture of truth; for of all these we make conscience, in their time and place, in which God the Father of all hath brought them forth to serve him.

As men would impose upon our Consciences *to come once a weeke to such a great house in their Parish*, which they call a *parish church*, and there we must observe what one man shall reade, preach or pray, for two or three houres that day, by a usual forme, and this man will have a *Clarke*, and he shall say *Amen* at the end of such a sentence, or part of his prayer or speech, and to this church and to this worship must we be bound while we dwell in that parish; And either the tythes of all we have, or so much a year set maintenance must be paid to the man calling himselfe a Minister of Christ; and so much a year to his *Clarke* for saying *Amen* after him, in money and egges, and the like; and if this we doe constantly we may live peaceably by them, and go under the name of a good Christian and a religious man, but if we faile in any of this, but especially in that of tythes or wages; then they call us heretickes and complaine of us to the {Page 37} Magistrate, or sue us at Law, till they have cast our bodyes into prisons and taken the spoyle of our goods. Now God having revealed his true worship to us in the light of Christ, which is in Spirit and truth, and called us out of such carnal things for which there is no Scripture, we cannot for Conscience sake worship any

more therein.

Now, neyther by the Spirit of Christ in us, nor by letter of Scriptures without us, nor by the example of all the holy men of God that have walked before us, can we for Conscience sake owne, nor uphold that for the true and spirituall worship of God in Spirit and truth, neither to repair their house, maintain their Priest, nor his Clarke, as they would impose upon us.

Now some have said, *What would you have no Church, Minister, preaching, praying, nor none of this worship, nor maintenance, &c. What would you have?*

We say yes, we owne a Church, ministering, preaching, praying, and the maintenance that thereto belongs, but we would have them to be of God and after his will in Christ Jesus, and not after the will and traditions of men, contrary both to God, good men and the Scriptures of truth; For we reade of a Church of Christ in Scriptures, but it was *in God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*. And we read of a ministry of Christ in Scripture, *made not of man, neither by man, but by the revelation of the Son of God in them*; And the Gospel or Ministry that they preached, was not *after man, nor received of man, neither was they taught it but by revelation of Jesus Christ*. And we read of a Maintenance they had, which was to live of the Gospel; and the spiritualls which they sowed freely without money or money-worth brought them forth fruits freely, both in spirituall things and worship towards God, and in carnall things towards their outward wants, and as they planted, so they eate. And where the plant grew, and the soule prospered, till it could bring forth fruit freely, there they need not to sue them and to take it by spoyle, but of the world they looked for naught but persecution, nor ever coveted or compelled any such thing from any creature, no not where they had sown and planted, unlesse it grew in Spirit and life to God; they looked not to reap anything but losse if that which they had sown withered in the way; therefore did they watch for the soule and not for tythes, pigs, and eggs and geese and sheaves, &c., but that the soule prospered towards God, that was their prize. And to make the Gospel without charge, that was their reward, if they did it freely and willingly, but if not willingly then *a necessity was laid upon them, and woe was their portion*.

And these went on and prospered, gathering Churches out of the world into God, from place to place, even where they was not sent for; they went freely as they was moved of the holy Spirit. And if any where they came was found worthy to receive them, with them they might eat freely what was set before them, where the Spirit was free, but they did not seat themselves in

a {Page 39} Towne, or say this is my Parish, and this is my hire, so much a yeare, but wandered to and fro, having no certain dwelling place, nor was their bellies any part of the bargain, as to coming, preaching, staying or going, as to any place.

And when they had gathered a Church into the Spirit and life of Christ Jesus, which brought them to meete together, then they did not Lord it over them in faith or conscience, neither was they called their Masters, but still *servants for Christ's sake*; nor did they get a glasse and set up, and if any spoke in their time, while they was speaking, say they broke their peace and send them to prison, but said *all might prophesy, that all might be edified*; and it was joy to them to heare any to speak by the Spirit, either son or daughter, and some might speake, and some might judge, of what was spoken: And if anything was *revealed* to him that stood by, the first was to hold his peace; and *the spirit of the Prophets is subject to the Prophets*. Now this Church and its order we owne, wherever we find it to be after God, and in him; but when we meet with a company of people that denyes all this, and if any be moved in the Spirit eyther to speake while they are speaking or judge what they have spoken, then the teacher cries away to prison with him, and the people runs upon us all a heapes, ready to pull us to pieces; this we owne not, nor doth Christ nor the Scriptures owne it to be his Church, this is not the spirit of the Prophets, nor subject to the Prophets, but the rude Spirit which {Page 40} tumulted upon the apostles and Prophets of old.

So here is somewhat declared of the ministry we owne, and his maintenance, but of such a thing as a *Clarke* we read not in Scriptures, neither name nor office. And now let none thinke it strange or an error in us, to compare & weigh and try and prove things, for we are christians, & have received the Spirit that is of *God*, that we may know the things that are given to us of God, from things that are of the world; And we may not receive every one for a Minister of Christ who tells us he is, nor that for a Church that every one calls a Church, nor that for worship which every one would impose upon us; for things had need of trying, and spirits also, and we hold fast that which is good. Its true in the world there be many Churches and many heads, Gods many, and Lords many, many faiths, and many opinions; but in Christ Jesus we are called to unity in all these things, so that we say with the Churches of Christ in Scripture, to us there is *one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all*. And this one God in us is a Spirit and will be worshipped in Spirit & in truth, so of us he requires truth, and

2 Cor. 4.5.

1 Cor. 14. 29,30,31.

1 John 4.1. 1Thes. 5.21. 1
Cor. 8. 5,6.

Eph. 4. 4,5,6.

that we worship no other things nor bow to them; though all men have not this faith but can follow any thing in their worship which is the fashion of the Nation where they live, but this we are called out of; and into that one worship we are come which is in spirit and truth, for in that is the Father worshipped, and God {Page 41} hath sought us out of the many worships that are in the world, in Spirit to Worship him; and Christ saith, these are the true worshippers that so worship, and into this hath Christ led us, and in it he ownes us in his Spirit, and the Father ownes us, and testifies to us in every enlightened conscience, and in this we are come to the Spirits of just men, and they owne us; And the letter of Scriptures it ownes us also, and in this we have peace, though persecuted.

But in all these, we read not in all the Gospel worship, of any *Temple made with hands* to bind men to, nor Parish Churches, nor preaching by the houre, nor for so much a yeare, nor that ever Minister of Christ took tythes, nor their hearers gave them, but confessed Christ come, and a free gospel, and said both the Priesthood that tooke tyths, and the Law by which they received them was disanulled by the sufferings of Christ; nor doe we read of *sprinkling Infants*, and calling that baptizing them *into the Church*, nor do we read of their singing *Davids* words in a meeter, nor praying in a forme, nor a *Clarke* to lead the Psalme and say *Amen*; And much more we might mention, which was never used so in the true Church but is come to a forme since popery came up, & the Scripture bears no testimony thereto, as now these things are used, and all that can be truly said for them is long custom, but from plain Scriptures they cannot prove them. *Heb 7.*

Indeed we read in the Scriptures of truth, of the gospel preaching, but it was not limited to one house, nor by a glasse, but from {Page 42} house to house, and Citie to Citie, and that by the Spirit, and their worship was in Spirit, they prayed with the Spirit, and they sung with the Spirit, and he that had a Psalme sung it with the Spirit, and with understanding also; And they worshipped, and preached in fields and mountains, and streets, & schools and markets, and they prayed by Sea-shores, or in any place where God moved and led them by the Spirit of Jesus; And all this we owne which the Scriptures testifies to, in our measure; And this is that we would have all brought to tryall, and that worship owned, which Christ and the Scriptures ownes, and none forced against it, by any means whatsoever, which is come up since the Scriptures was written, and the Apostles times.

And this motion, is not unreasonable, hurtfull or dangerous to any, especially (we may say) in this Nation, how can it be denied, wherein all other

formes in words professe the Scriptures to be a rule for all to walk by? And to you all this is our motion, that the Scriptures may be heard what it saith without wresting, and what sort of worship it testifies of, let that have the name to be of God, and then let none be forced from it; and if you deny to be tried in your faith and profession by that you have so long called your rule and touchstone, and then reproach and persecute them that walke in it, will not your own words judge you before men, and shall not you walke under condemnation from God in your owne Consciences. And thus in short have we shewed our desires, and what we would have in this thing, which might {Page 43} free every tender Conscience from oppression, and the magistrates of the nations from the guilt thereof before God.

Will you call yourselves Christian Magistrates, and Christian Ministers, and set yourselves against what Christ hath wrought by the power of his Spirit, and is now working, and think you are doing him service when you are grieving his Spirit, and persecuting him in his members for doing that to which he immediately leads them now, as in the dayes of old; Is not this in effect to say, depart from our Nations, we will have none of thy wayes, nor shall any under our government, or that will follow our teachings, obey thy Spirit if we can stop them by our power, is not this to withstand his appearance, and resist the power that you profess to rule for.

Doe you not read in the Acts of the Apostles what labor and suffering they underwent to bring people out of carnall rudiments and ordinances of men, and to bring them to the worship in Spirit and truth alone, both as to time, place, and order; how did they run in hazard of their lives, into Temples, Synagogues, and set places of worship, to bring them out of Temples made with hands, to worship where the Spirit should lead them without respect of places; that so the words of the Lord Jesus might be fulfilled, who had said, *Not in the temple, nor in the mountain, but in Spirit and in truth should the Father be worshipped*; and did not Stephen lose his life for telling them that *God that made the world dwelt not in temples made with hands*; {Page 44} and Paul suffered for the same testimony, and they told them the most high God could not be worshipped with men's hands, nor carnall things, but *in Spirit and in truth*. And how often was they tumulted and beaten, and their blood shed for this testimony against the beggarly rudiments, & carnal ordinances of men, both of Jews, who had their ordinances from the letter, and also the Gentiles who followed their customes, that out of all carnal things they might bring them, to follow God in spirit, and therein alone to serve him.

John 4.21, 24.

Acts 7.48. Acts 17.24.

And while you professe all this in words, will you be the men that will deny the very same in workes, and shall you be guiltlesse, shall not both Jews and Gentiles rise in Judgment against you, and condemn you, who acts against knowledge, Scriptures, and your own profession? And is it not so with you Rulers and Teachers of this generation? what force and cruelty hath been used to bring people back to your Idol temples made with hands, there to worship and no where else, and to repaire them, and to bow to the customes of men there set up, for which there is neither Scriptures nor example; even too many to mention, what imprisoning and tormenting of the spirituall worshippers of the living God hath there been in these last days for these things? What sufferings have some gone through but for testifying against these traditionous carnal, & saying the Church must be in God, and that everyone must come to be led by the Spirit alone in all their whole worships, and so give the kingdome & {Page 45} leading of his people to the leading of Christ that spirit againe, in all things pertaining to worship, life and godlinesse; hath not this been a dangerous thing in this age to bear this record of God in Christ, or so to become his witness? how many have lost their liberties, their estates, and some their lives for this testimony in word and practice, which reconciles to God in all his whole worship? and yet the same is read and preached, every first day among them that doe this to such as live the life thereof for Jesus sake; these are not the workes of Christians indeed, in the Apostles sense, but of such as know not God, nor the word of reconciliation have not.

How many have suffered in this age, but for reproving sin in the gate, cursing, pride, lying, and swearing; how have some been beaten, pulled and haled, and dragg'd through streets and channells and before Judgment seats, and to prisons, for no other things; how many have woefully suffered but for preaching repentance through streets, towns, and markets, in the name of the Lord and by the Call of his Holy Spirit? How many hundreds have been imprisoned for preaching the everlasting Gospel of Jesus freely, in Towns, Temples, streets, and markets, and from house to house, which was the manner of God's messengers in the name of his Son ever to doe, and for which they suffered; How many have had their cloaths rent off their backs, and been shamefully beaten till they have been left for dead, and afterward carried to prison for but asking a question or speaking a word in a Steeplehouse, while a {Page 46} man hath been speaking things doubtfull, or not true, though this was the way of old in which the servants of Christ walked, and by which he gathered the churches into God in Spirit, and out of false worships; And it was

the manner of the Apostles to enter into Synagogues and places of worships both of Jews and Gentiles on their sabbath dayes, and openly dispute there with them before their hearers, and then whose hearts God touched, left their carnal worships and clave to Christ in Spirit, which is now become a greater offense to this generation than ever it was eyther to Jews or Gentiles; for I never read that simply for so disputing they either beat them or haled them to prison, though they went sometimes three Sabbath days together into one Synagogue; yea, the fiery Jews, who was set on mischief against that way, yet this they could suffer in their Synagogue, as is testified *Acts 17:2.* and saith the Scriptures, *this was his manner.* And in *Acts 18:4* it is said, *he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath day at Corinth,* where he continued a year and six months teaching the word of God among them, *vers. 11.*

Now hath not this been the great offense of these dayes, yea, I may say the chieftest crime which the servants of Jesus Christ hath suffered for, in this age, and none scarce eyther ruler or teacher is able to bear it once, which they could bear a yeare and above among Jews and heathens; so that this way of Christ by which the Churches was gathered & called in the Apostles time, is become more abominable in the sight of those that calls {Page 47} themselves Christians, than it was eyther to Jews or heathens; And when neither laws of Jews, Gentiles, nor heathens, that was made in times of popery, would answer their wills against this, then have they made new laws of their own against this practice, which themselves read, believe and preach; and this we cannot owne, that men should withstand that in works which they professe in words and seeke to impose it upon others who serve God therein by the Spirit of Jesus, and then call themselves Christians, and say the Scriptures is their rule, who cannot beare it in them that practice it in obedience to Christ Jesus.

And this is that we contend for in all our sufferings and actings, in the simplicity of our hearts, that our Lord and Master Jesus Christ may have his Prerogative Royall restored to him, over his *body, the Church,* and every particular member thereof, his *Lordship* and *Mastership,* given to him alone of all his children, from least to the greatest, and that none else force it, or require it from him, but that his *headship alone over his Church,* his leadings, and the seat of his Judgments, in every redeemed soule and conscience may be restored to him, and that he may have both name and authority therein, and that none may presume to take his authority to themselves, while they give him fair words & call him *Lord, Lord,* but neither doe his will in their own consciences, nor suffer them that would; This, I say, is that we seeke

now at the hands of men that are called Christians, which by his own blood and by the precious sufferings {Page 48} in many of his obedient servants of old he once purchased out of the hands of the old persecutors, and gave it as inheritance to his seed after him to all generations, to call him *head and Lord in them and over them*, in all things pertaining to worship and conscience, as the Scripture of truth is evident.

And this we say in his behalfe, and in the power of his name, where ever he sends us, that though his adversary of old hath taken this his purchased possession from him, and now sits where he ought not, commanding in conscience over his subjects and creatures, compelling and forcing to obey his traditions and law from a carnal precept or tradition of men, yet we say the right is Christs alone, and the whole kingdome of God in every conscience he hath purchased with his blood and great sufferings of old; therefore we say to all sorts of people, looke to him and walke in his light, all that looke to be saved; for we say he is *a great and mighty one*, who though he have been as one gone a far journey for a time, yet he is returned and hath seen how his dear servants have been entreated, and his little children spoyled of their birthright and cast out of their purchased possession and heavenly kingdom, and now strangers rule over their tender consciences, and seek to defile them with adultery and idolatry, which is against their spiritual birth and breathing, and himsele robbed of his authoritie and Scepter of his everlasting Dominion, for which he will {Page 49} tread nations in his wrath and people in his hot displeasure, even for *Zion's sake, the Citie of his glory*, and he will spoyle the spoyler and lead Captivity captive, and so will he make way for his inheritance to come into their habitation of rest.

And this we say to all people: *GIVE UP, fear God, and give glory to his Name, for the hour of his Judgments is come*, and he will have dominion as of old and his purchased possession as in ancient dayes. But especially to you who are called Christians and mention his name, and call him Lord, and profess the Scriptures in words, which testifies of him, his sufferings, and his purchase through blood, and the eternal anoynting of the Father, sworne unto him by an everlasting Covenant, that he alone shall sit on the spirituall throne, over the house of *David* forever, that he may with his spirituall leadings gather the outcasts of *Israel* and present to God all the precious among the people; have you not read you professing Priests and Rulers, that it is he alone that is *the light of the world*, and that God hath given him for a witnesse to the people, a leader and commander; that its he thats appointed for *a light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*, to guide

Jer. 10.2,3

Isa. 55.4.

Luke 1.79.

Heb. 1.6.

their feete in the way of peace; did God ever set any at the right hand of power but he alone, that he might make his foes his footstoole; of whom he saith when he brings him into the world, *Let all the angels of God worship him*; have you not read that its he alone that purgeth the Conscience from dead {Page 50} works. And will you not suffer him to reigne and govern therein; hath not he quickened every living soule, and created anew every free Spirit, and would you take and keepe the kingdome therein, out of his hand, and rule there for another, or your selves, with force and cruelty; Is not this he for whom the Sabbath was made, and all the ordinances under heaven speaks his dominion? And will you now read this and professe, and withstand him in the Consciences of his tender people, and deny him to rule in his Church alone? have you not read what God hath said of him and his enemies in the second Psalme; nay, are not all the Scriptures his, and testifie to him alone as *head over all* and ruler in all his saints? And as you have heard, read, and professed his dominion more then heathens, and yet go on to keepe it from him; so to you is his first appearance, to seeke his own of you. And if you persist to deny him, its you must drinke the Cup first, that the heathens may heare and feare his name from farre, and his rising appear to all the ends of the world, that its he alone who is from everlasting, at whose name every knee must bow and tongue confesse, to the right of his inheritance.

Mica. 3.

And this further I lay before you people of this Nation, who have long been crying for peace and settlement in the Nations and in your religion, and you cry out of so many divisions and so many religions; I say to you all, how should you be otherwise when you will not come to the *one religion that is* {Page 51} *of God*, and was in the beginning with God, and brought forth in time by Jesus Christ, for the bringing all into God againe, and reconciling all sorts of scattered people, who are scattered in the imaginations and customes of carnall spirited men, from God the one good thing into many things, rudiments, and traditions, wherein you can neither be reconciled to God, nor one to another; for how is it like that ever that religion can reconcile to God, which sets you a killing one another to uphold it? are you like to obtaine peace in that Spirit which in your hearts is the cause of enmity and warre, or obtaine unity from that roote which hath thus scattered you in its fruits and off spring; This is like the false prophets of old, who would *bite with their teeth and cry peace*.

Nay, this is not the way of settlement or lasting peace, *THAT*, you must have in returning and making peace with the Spirit of Jesus, you must kisse

the Son and so make peace, for this hath been seen concerning you of these Nations, that if you owne not the light of Christ in Spirit and truth, that he may lead you out of these many things which are not of God, and reconcile you to God in spirit and truth, there to worship him alone who is a Spirit, you will ere long be in bloud, eyther amongst your selves, one against another, or else in the bloud of the innocent Lambs of Christ, which will not be for your peace with God, for he that hath letted your peace and settlement, is not yet taken away, nor his power, who is that old {Page 52} bloud-sucker, and divider of Nations, people, and tongues, about faith and religions, and with which a fire hath often been kindled; nor can his power be stopped but by the Spirit of the *Lambe of God*, which takes away sin and breaks downe the wall of separation, which is made about ordinances, litterall, ceremoniall, and traditionall, which can never cease but as men turne to the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, That with the light of peace and truth you may be led into peace, truth, and unity, that wrath may be done away, and the ground thereof, and you and your religion may be settled on the foundation of truth, *Christ Jesus the chief corner stone*, and not upon dayes, times, meats, drinks and apparell, and other things which will perish with the using, and so will they that worship and not in the leadings of Christ alone, and God will shake the Idolls of peoples minds and all the glory of flesh, that he alone may be exalted in the earth, as he is in heaven.

Col. 2.14,15,16,17,20,21,22.
Heb. 10.11.

So if you will have peace you must come to the Son of peace, and if you will have establishment you must come to the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles of God; for I say, many have been about to build a house for God to dwell in, with carnall things and rudiments, and this they would bind him to (& his people,) who is a Spirit, and his house must be built of spirituall men and women who like living stones must grow up in his owne light and vertue into a holy temple in the Lord; In which you must be builded {Page 53} together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, *Eph.* 2:20, 21, 22. And this is God's house built by Christ alone, with that which is elect and precious, not with gold and garments, or observations of perishing things, but with redeemed soules by the bloud of Jesus out of their vaine conversation, and gathered into the Spirit of truth and life and power, to worship God who is a Spirit, in Spirit & truth; and this is God's house at this day, which was his house in the Apostles dayes, *who dwells not in temples made with hands*, as saith the Apostles, nor with mens hands is worshipped, but with him thats poore in spirit *and of a broken and contrite heart, to him will I looke*, saith the Lord, *and there will I dwell*; And the bodyes of his holy people are the

Isa. 66.2.

Temples of the living God, as he hath said, *I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people* 2 Cor. 6:16. And until you come to this building of God in your selves, God will not dwell with you in peace, but all your buildings will he confound, and not accept your sacrifice, and then the devil will enrage you against Gods house and spirituall building, even his poore despised people them to destroy, like *Cain* when his sacrifice was not accepted in his owne will.

But if you turne to the Lord who is that Spirit, then will he cause his light to shine in your hearts, to give you an heavenly understanding, and he will put his Spirit in your inward parts, and fill you with {Page 54} heavenly power, and will let you see the lively Image of truth and peace; and he will take away the vaile of the covering that is spread over all Nations, from which arises all their carnall comprehensions, and carnall worships of the invisible spirituall God, and he will also swallow up death in victory, which now worketh in the Nations, to kill one another about religion and worship, without Spirit and life, so will you come to be taught his true worship, who is a Spirit, and become true worshippers in Spirit, and so grow up in his knowledge, and he will owne your worship, whom as yet you have *neither heard his voice at any time, nor seene his shape*. And Christ saith of such worshippers, *You worship you know not what*; but the true worshippers worship in faith and know what they worship, *and such the Father is now seeking to worship him*, saith Christ Jesus, *John* 4:22, 23, 24.

And this is the thing oh *England*, that concerns thy peace with thy God in this thy day, who art cumbered with many things about Christ and worship, but neglects the one thing needfull for thy everlasting peace and establishment, and to bring thee into that worship of Spirit, without which God cannot accept thee, and that religion which is pure and undefiled in the sight of God, which will keepe thee unspotted in the world, which till thou turne to, thou wilt be working against the Spirit of God, through the darknesse of enmity, that is in thee, and he will certainly worke against thee except thou repent.

THE END

J.N

R.H.

Isa. 25. 7,8.

2 *Cor.* 3.16,17,18.

John 5.37.

Luke 19.42. *Luke* 10.41,42.

James 1.27.